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SUBJECT: POST NOMINATION FOR U.S. LABOR AWARD

¶1. (U) Summary. Post highly recommends Mr. Muhammad Saifullah Choudhry for the U.S. Department of Labor's Iqbal Masih Award for the Elimination of Child Labor (reftel A). Post believes Mr. Choudhry exemplifies the spirit of this award due to his contributions in reducing the worst forms of child labor and pressing for change at the district, provincial and national levels in Pakistan. Mr. Choudhry has been successful in raising awareness due to his targeted approach and focus on six specific industries which have the worst child labor violations such as glass bangle manufacturing, deep sea fishing, coal mining, surgical instrument manufacturing, and leather tanning. End Summary.

¶2. (U) Post nominates Mr. Muhammad Saifullah Choudhry for the U.S. Department of Labor's Iqbal Masih Award for the Elimination of Child Labor because he has significantly contributed to the reduction of the worst forms of child labor and has promoted constructive change regarding the labor exploitation of children in Pakistan. Mr. Choudhry has been working for International Labor Organization's (ILO) International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor since ¶2001. He has made an invaluable contribution in the campaign against the Worst Forms of Child Labor (WFCL) in all four provinces of Pakistan. Mr. Choudhry has been successful due to his targeted approach and focus on six specific industries which have the worst child labor violations such as glass bangle manufacturing, deep sea fishing, coal mining, surgical instrument manufacturing, and leather tanning.

¶3. (U) His understanding of the WFCL issue and his acts to combat it have put a serious dent in the practices of WFCL in Pakistan in various hazardous industries. Mr. Choudhry's contribution at the policy level has succeeded in influencing child labor legislation and education policy to expand coverage to the worst forms of child labor. In concert with the Ministry of Education, he began a national level dialogue on the educational needs of children in the worst form of labor. Now for the first time ever, Pakistan has a clear policy which provides education to children who were employed in these sectors. He held national level consultations, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor, and spearheaded efforts to amend Pakistan's child labor legislation by expanding the hazardous occupations which were included, in the Employment of Child Act.

¶4. (U) His creativity and his advanced understanding of the incidence of WFCL have allowed Mr. Choudhry to devise an innovative program, the National Time-Bound Program (TBP), to help eliminate WFCL from Pakistan. The USD 4 million Time Bound Program, which was

funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, represented a unique approach and was adopted to build the capacity of local authorities to take direct action against WFCL in six district governments (Gwadar, Hyderabad, Kasur, Sialkot, Rawalpindi and Shangla) and in all four provinces. This approach not only built the capacity of the target district governments to combat WFCL, but also helped in leveraging additional resources from the district government and partner NGOs for the rehabilitation of WFCL children and their families. More than 11,800 children in these six hazardous sectors have benefited from TBP project interventions.

15. (U) As an ILO officer, Mr. Choudhry advised the Government of Pakistan and helped it develop District Education Plans and District based Child Labor Monitoring Systems. Mr. Choudhry mobilized NGOs to extend small loans to families of WFCL, which totaled 2,254 families and approximately PKR 22.5 million (USD 281,250).

16. (U) Mr. Choudhry has also contributed immensely in generating knowledge on the incidence of child trafficking under another U.S. Department of Labor funded Project (the Pakistan component of ILO-IPEC's regional TICSa project) on child trafficking. Under his leadership, two studies on child trafficking were completed and published. He also built up the capacity of local district authorities to check the recruitment of children for camel jockey races in the Middle East. Mr. Choudhry is a regular key note speaker at high level Pakistani government training for senior government officers on issues like the worst forms of child labor, child trafficking, and bonded labor practices.

17. (U) Presently, Mr. Choudhry is working for the ILO Pakistan office

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as a Senior Program Officer. His phone number is +92.51.2276456, email - msaif@ilo.org, address - ILO Building, G-5/2, Adjacent to State Bank of Pakistan, Islamabad, Pakistan.

PATTERSON